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of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen [755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another.

● [821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No [845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This 826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

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own. The child gets its bone from the father's semen, and its 843
flesh from the mother's vaginal secretions. The food eaten by
the mother causes the fœtus to grow; but once the baby is
completely formed inside the womb it feeds on its mother's
menstrual blood, which explains why the menses cease
during pregnancy.

It is generally believed that a girl has her first menses 881
about one month after she copulates for the first time, even
though she be only nine or ten years old. Nothing is done or
said at such a time; nor on any later occasion is any kind of
special clothing or bandage worn. This is the origin of
menstruation:

In olden times menstruation was confined to men, who 773
used to bleed from the knees. In view of their normal 539
occupations, working in the fields, hunting, and so on, this 841
was very inconvenient, since the blood dripped all over the
place. Nazong Nyu noticed this and wondered what he
could do to remedy it.

Now in those days the female genitalia were situated in the
middle of the forehead. Nazong thought this did not look
very nice and decided to change the position. He summoned
some bulbuls and told them to peck out the women's parts
and replant them in their chins. This they did; but after a
time Nazong still did not think the general effect was very
pleasing. He summoned the birds again and told them to
move the parts to the women's chests; but still he was not
satisfied. Finally he had them moved to the place where they
now are; and seeing that they were suitably hidden beneath
the women's clothing he decided that it would be more
convenient if women menstruated instead of men. As a
result of this arrangement the women started to bleed
periodically from that very day, and the bulbul still has a
blood-red spot on its tail: this it acquired when it was
carrying out Nazong Nyu's orders.

One day when I was talking to Karma we were all 821
laughing rather loudly at some remark when there was a 831

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sudden burst of thunder, not an unusual occurrence in Lingtem. This would at first sight appear to have no connection with the subject of sex; but actually it has. It is considered at all times dangerous to laugh when there is thunder about, but this is the story Karma told me:

"Once, when I was a small boy, I went on a visit to Gangtok. I had been down to the bazaar and was sitting talking to some Nepalis in the shop of a betel-nut seller. There was a small lizard running up and down the wall at the time and one of the men laughed and spat a jet of red *pan* juice at it. It remained without moving, merely blinking its eyes in the peculiar quick manner that lizards have: it then ate some of the spittle. Immediately after it suddenly grew quite dark and still; and then there was a terrific crash of thunder followed by the most vivid streak of lightning I have ever seen. We were all thrown to the ground, and several of the men were so badly injured that they had to be taken to hospital; but I myself was only a little dazed. There is no doubt that the lizard caused this sudden burst of thunder and called it down on the men as a punishment for laughing at it.

"Incidentally, there are certain men who involuntarily cause sudden thunder if anyone laughs on beholding their private parts. There are not many such; and in fact there is no one living in Lingtem at the moment who possesses this peculiar quality.

"I well remember when the present monastery was being built: there was a boy from a neighbouring village who was helping to carry up stones from the river. Babu was his name. The work was very heavy, and since it was a hot and sultry day the men had discarded most of their clothing. On the way up the hill Babu's trousers slipped down, so that his penis was exposed. All the women started to laugh and to make remarks about his person. Almost at once the sky grew dark and then there was a terrific burst of thunder, followed by lightning. Babu ran off towards Jiroong's house, which was nearby. As he did so we saw the lightning appear

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to enter the ground where the monastery staircase now is; but before it actually touched the ground it appeared to jink away to one side, and a large thunderbolt fell at the exact spot where Babu was sheltering, under the walnut-tree just outside Jiroong's house.

"As for me, it makes no difference if I strip off all my clothes and dance naked in public; my genitalia are completely innocuous. There is no effect if people laugh at a woman's private parts."

This is the origin of marriage among the Lepchas:

Itpumu was the creator of all things, of human beings and natural objects, even of Kinchinjunga. After having many children she at last gave birth to Tarbong Bo, the youngest of all her sons. When he began to take notice and could walk about a little, he said to Itpumu one day: "Mother, are you going to travel about the world, or do you intend always to stay here?" She replied: "No, I shall never leave this place; and you, too, must never leave me." But Tarbong was very anxious to see the world, and at last persuaded his mother to let him go. She prepared some rice, put it in a bag, and sorrowfully let him go. He set off over the slopes of Konchen, after which he came to a place called Paki Chu.

From Paki Chu he descended to Palyung Chu, which is a plateau a little above Sakyong, in the Talung Valley. As he sat on Palyung Chu he saw below him many beautiful fruit trees, and many kinds of birds which were busily eating the fruit. As he sat watching the scene he ate the rice his mother had given him. He thought he had seen enough for the time being and hurried home to his mother. Arrived there he climbed at once on to her lap and searched for her breasts. While she was suckling him she asked him what he had seen: "Oh, Mother! I have been to Palyung Chu, where I saw the most beautiful trees, and many birds eating the fruit." To this Itpumu replied: "Now, my son, if you are indeed a real man you must get hold of *Yong Ming Yong-song* and *Komok Ki*. These are two special kinds of thread, and when

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Ayek-rum and Alat-rum, have an important part in their worship. The spirits that protect individual persons are also of importance. This is particularly true of Hit-rum who is the protecting spirit of the Bong-thing. When a Bong-thing dies his soul, like a shadow, goes to Hit-rum. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār has the following nine protecting spirits: Sur-mu-mu-rum, Bong-thing-rum, Dang-mu-rum, Niu-leg-rum, Mōn-lam-rum, Tok-tzōm-rum, Darmit-rum, Nam-jin-rum. These he must honour in a very special manner. Thus we see that the Rong believe in the existence of many gods and spirits and take pains in arranging them in the order of male and female couples. 776

In contrast with these benign gods are the innumerable hordes of demons and goblins who cause harm to men and animals, fields and forests. There are tracks in the mountains which are considered to be the footsteps of the gigantic monster, Mi-gat-mung. Ma-ra-mung is a very evil demon, who flies up into the sky and reveals himself there in the form of comets, northern lights and other astral phenomena. Each one of the human illnesses is caused by a demon: Ru-mung, consumption; Dom-mung, leprosy; etc., and these constitute the great flock of disease-demons. Goblins and witches lurk in the mountains, woods, gorges and deserts. It is necessary to obtain safeguards and measures of protection against all demons and evil spirits, and these are vouchsafed by the Supreme Being through his priests, the Mun and the Bong-thing. [321] ● [753]

(g) The Mun and the Bong-thing

Stocks quotes an illuminating legend concerning the origin of the Bong-thing. Through the interchanging of the Waters of Life and Death the Mung demons had acquired immortality. It became incumbent on God to set right the order of things. "Everything was nearly completed, but a Bong-thing was required as a mediator to speak between the Rum and the Humans" (Rum made many efforts that failed). "...Then there was only one child of the Creator left, and he didn't wish to leave home, but the Creator who loved him like a mother, told him he ought to go and see his brothers 773 776 793